/52 cont./

881 will mean serious troubles for her family, since the noncompliance with social norms will bring the consequences of her illegal behavior on the family group. In addition she will be lacking in responsibility and will perform badly her role as sister, wife, and mother, just the functions for which she is preparing, and these two factors weigh very much in the life of the Guajiro woman as a member of society. The charms properly applied so that they transmit their power will assure her married happiness: She will not find herself exposed to the problems of polygamy, which imply lack of affection and ill-treatment from the man who buys her for his wife, and in this way she will have the longed-for predominance over him and over the co-wives, who in consequence will take a secondary place by the force of her personality.

881 Once inside the hammock she must not move nor change
784 her original position, because it is believed that /should she do so/, on being brought down later, she will have one leg longer than the other. Neither may she scratch any part of her body because that will leave visible scars. This matter is very important as the ceremony of the seclusion transforms her physically from a girl to a woman, wholly bound to the canon of beauty held by her group, an aspect, which like the others will also greatly affect her adult life. One must also
826 take into account that in La Guajira a physical defect has
578 a powerful influence on the individual and to mention it is equivalent to an insult which will give rise to resentment on the part of the adult and could bring sinister consequences upon the offender.

Neither should the initiate spit on the floor, because by doing so her honor will be slandered in her unmarried life as well as later after marriage, as they would say of her, judging by appearances or through unfounded malevolence, that she had dealings with a man. They will say she is a "madcap" /cabeza-loco/, a nickname they give to a woman of easy virtue and which causes discord between men and women and which will deeply affect her legitimate hopes for marriage.

/108 cont./

833 been deprived of her will and that she does not count as a person. For these reasons she regards her marital life as a hard duty to perform, at odds with her own personality. Possibly, for this reason, the man seeks out the mestizo, who is free of these prejudices and for that reason more capable to give and to derive for herself greater satisfaction from her marital life than the pure Indian woman.

595 833 As it is not uncommon for a man to have two, three, or even more co-wives living together in one house, his conduct in his conjugal relations must be very circumspect if he wishes to preserve, at least in appearance, a cordial or friendly feeling among them, because if he is not circumspect, jealousies will spring up and a bitter struggle of lengthy repercussions ensue. As each one of the wives endeavors to find a motive that will justify her as superior in the eyes of the others, he has to behave with extreme caution. For this reason he sleeps outside in the enramada /bough-covered shelter/ while his women and their children sleep inside the house. He never suggests to any one of them that they should spend the night together, as the one thus favored would announce this preference to place herself on a superior plane. For this reason he receives whichever one goes voluntarily to him to his hammock.

834 The man suspends marital relations during the time the woman's pregnancy is advanced. He does this for fear of causing a miscarriage for which he might be blamed, and because of the belief that it might give rise to a bad delivery.

After the birth of the child, marital life is not resumed until the woman voluntarily asks for it.

842 Ideas about fecundation. The Guajiro knows that fecundation is the result of the combined action of the woman and the man through the means of the sexual act. They know that in this act the man gives an element which joined to the feminine one will form the new being. They say that the [826] woman has in her internal parts a special organ in which this new being will gradually take form, the womb, called in their

/108 cont./

842 language the urá-hu-chon ("place where babies are formed"). But in order to be fruitful the woman must menstruate at regular [826] intervals. Otherwise they will be sterile, and in La Guajira cases of this are known.

They explain the necessity of menstruation for fecundation by saying that after a woman has had her monthly period, in spite of bathing her body and her exterior genital organs most carefully, there remains in the interior of the womb a small quantity of menstrual blood, the last of that period; and when the sexual act occurs, the male sperm mixing with the female blood will form the new being, who from the first moment shows all the characteristics of an adult in miniature /109/ but needs a period of residence in the maternal womb to be nourished and to develop properly. When this moment arrives, birth takes place. They do not know what causes the difference in sex. They think, furthermore, that the female blood beside being a contribution to the initial formation of the new being is also its food, because they have observed the disappearance of the menstrual cycle during pregnancy.

Consequently, for the loss of blood the mother suffers during her pregnancy (nourishment of the fetus) and during the birth, her relatives claim compensation payment from the husband; they demand two payments in this connection which we have already described in a special section of this chapter.

Now we can understand why the payment made in such circumstances cannot be touched or made use of by the woman when it is a payment of animals, because, as we have said, it would mean that she was figuratively consuming herself, as it represents her lost blood, part of her very life.

843 The woman during pregnancy acquires certain magic properties and she finds it necessary to observe a large number of taboos in order to carry to a happy fulfillment the gestation which is taking place. She herself is considered a being of potential and dangerous magic for weak and sick people, whom she must not visit because she will instill a feeling of sorrow and sickness in them, and this could cause them to have a relapse or lead to their death.

[45 cont.]
782 quite high, which also gives us an idea of their value in the opinion of the Indians since they considered that the fact of their points being impregnated with the blood of the sacrificed child made them both more poisonous and more accurate.

766 The body of the boy, who had to be between four and six years old, was brought by the father to the hamlet after these magic operations were finished and was buried in the clan cemetery. The burial and the death of the child were secrets. Nobody must know about it. We could not discover if the secret
[682 nature of the ceremony was due to the fact that the community
789] might punish the murderer, the mother or maternal aunt, or some member of the child's family on the maternal side, collecting the corresponding sum for his death in accord [46] with customary Guajiro law, or if the reason was that secrecy strengthened the malevolent qualities of the poison on the arrows. It is to be presumed that the latter hypothesis is the more acceptable, since the disappearance of the child and the sale of magic arrows by the father would point him out as the author of the sacrifice.

682 In any case we cannot overlook the aspects of blood in
683 the child sacrifice just mentioned. Spilling blood is one of the
826 crimes most severely punished. Blood, according to everything one can deduce, has great value for the natives, as it is considered an integral part of their human personality, even to confounding it, so to speak, with personality itself, as they do in the case of names. Hence, for the same reason, he who voluntarily or involuntarily sheds the blood of another person is stigmatized and becomes an outcast from society. He becomes unclean, and in consequence has to make the corresponding reparation which at the present time is complied with by paying to the offended party or to his family a determined
[411] quantity of valuable objects or animals. For this same reason, arrows contaminated with the blood of the child sacrificed by his father have, or ought to have, according to the Guajiro mentality, an incalculable value due to their participation in
411 the sacrifice and spilling of blood, thanks to its presence on
935 their points. Moreover, if we take into account what the
775 dead man means to the Guajiro as a spirit capable of doing harm

[65 cont.]

843 and very carefully wash it [in water]. Giving the woman this
845 water to drink will permit her to deliver the child immediately.

If a Guajiro father has to set off on a long journey on
751 horseback, leaving behind his newborn son, he must comply
854 with another custom of a magic nature, which requires him to
492 wrap the cinch of his horse about the child for a few minutes. If he fails to do this, the child will be very ill and complain pitifully during the time his father is absent. An equivalent form under the same circumstances is the father's customarily placing his foot on the newborn baby's chest for a brief moment. If this obligation is not complied with, either through forgetfulness or all will on the part of the father, the mother, or some close relative of the child, must find the father's old sandals and place them on the child's chest for a few moments in order to obtain the effect desired, which the ritual action if performed by the father would have accomplished.

751 We venture to attempt an explanation of the last two
854 phenomena as follows: The object that is sought in the fulfillment of these two traditional customs is to drive away from the child the presence of the wanurú or the evil spirit of sickness. The pressure exercised by the father's foot or, lacking this, [66] by
753 the father's old sandals, symbolizes his presence in the child
826 precisely in the place where the spirits in order to attain their evil designs often lodge in the child's body, i.e., its chest, as we shall have occasion to see in the following chapter. This symbolic presence of the father prevents the spirits from approaching near the child to work it harm. Lastly, the custom of wrapping the cinch of [the harness of] the horse on which the father will be traveling around the body of the child is intimately linked
825 with the belief of these natives that the horse has the power to frighten away the wanurú, or spirit of sickness, with its snorting; more simply this same protection is achieved by placing a horse's skull in a place near the houses. (Cf. "Amulets, Fetishes, Talismans." Also, in this case there is a substitution of the magic formula (using the cinch instead of the horse), a substitution that has exactly similar effects and the action of which could be based on one of the laws of magic established by Sir J. G. Frazer

[66 cont.]
751 according to which "things which have once been in contact with
854 each other continue to act on each other at a distance after the physical contact has been severed." (45) [Cited in Spanish.]

45. Frazer. La Rama Dorada, [The Golden Bough], III, 27.

751 There is another medical preventative, also of a magic
843 nature, taken to avoid infant mortality in Guajiro marriages after the death of the first-born child. This preventative obliges
[766] them to bury the body in a certain manner. It also imposes upon the mother a further seclusion, such as she underwent on reaching puberty (ceremony of initiation), and entails her taking certain medicines extracted from vegetable roots. If all these prescriptions are not fully complied with, her future children will die successively as soon as they are born.

844 Once the child is born, the placenta must be thrown a long way away from the house and completely lost to sight. If
[777] it is buried it will bring bad luck to the child, who in consequence of such an imprudence will live a weakling and suffer greatly until his death.

853 When only two or three days after the mother has given
827 birth, her breasts badly swell with severe pains and a lack of
755 milk, her husband must place his foot on her naked breast, pressing lightly on it, with which treatment the woman will recover. When a mother loses her milk after a long period of breast feeding and is no longer able to nourish her child, she must be struck on her shoulder and her breasts a number of times with the branches of a plant which is found mainly in the neighborhood of [67] Puerto Estrella and which on being cut emits a white liquid.

826 The Guajiro takes great care of any of his hair which has
754 been cut off, as he is afraid that it can be used to do him harm. This fear is based on the belief that if anyone can obtain possession of a lock of hair, whatever harm he may do to this will react directly on its owner; if that hair, for example, is thrown on the fire, its original owner will suffer a similar fate:

[67 cont.]

826 754 he will die consumed by flames. Likewise, if a lock of human hair is buried with a small quantity of dog excrement, the person who carries out this act of witchcraft can cause any harm he wishes to the owner of the hair.

648 757 Medicine practiced by foreigners. To ensure that his child will be sound and fit and show greater resistance to sickness, the Guajiro father makes use of the medicine of the Arhuaco, who like the other natives we know connect this art directly with magic. It is well to take note, before pursuing this description, that the Arhuaco are held to be excellent doctors by all their neighbors, not only by the Indians but also by mestizos and mulattos, and even by Whites. The fame of these curers is such that sick people from the neighboring cities of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta and even from Maracaibo have themselves carried to them to be cured of their illnesses, or, as a last resort, send them some of their personal articles of underclothing by which the Arhuaco curer determines the sickness from which the individual is suffering and sends the necessary medicines.

The Guajiro have not escaped this influence. Their geographical nearness facilitates communication with the Arhuaco, but we do not know whether this interchange of relations was already established before the Conquest or if it is due to the external influence of the colonists who have settled on the slopes of the Sierra or in regions close to them, who in their turn have transmitted the legend of the fame of the Arhuaco as doctors to the Indians of La Guajira.

757 751 278 843 The fact is that generally, shortly before the birth of a child or when some opportunity presents itself, the father goes to the Arhuaco, and from one of them who knows the preventative or curative value of plants he obtains several of these in order to doctor his child or prevent its sicknesses. Among these herbs are the vira-vira, quina dulce ["sweet quina], the frailejón, and a number of others. These herbs are shredded and put into a bottle containing rum and to this mixture is added two kinds of drops, also of plant juices, which have been carefully [68] "whispered" or "muttered" over by the Arhuaco doctor. These drops, in addition to the plants to which we have previously

[94 cont.]

832 made into a ball. This paste is dissolved in the water that the person wishing to profit by its powers uses in his bath, or some other way which we shall see later.

d) Also considered a love charm is the string of necklaces made of small pieces of coconut shell and worn as ornaments by the Indian girls.

[626] e) A thing that is very commonly used as a love charm, especially by girls, is their own hair.

f) With the hair which has been taken from a girl when her first menstrual period occurs and mixed with hummingbird's blood, dog's tail, and achiote [bija], they make a love charm which has a most powerful effect on the girl to whom the hair belongs. The man who acquires it can consider himself virtually her owner.

g) Lastly, an element that enters decisively in the effective value of love charms is achiote powder, which should be rubbed on certain parts of the body of the owner of the charm when he or she wishes to attain a certain end.

Application and effects. When a woman makes use of a love [262] charm which will give her the power always to be attractive to her husband and to regain his lost love or to win it, she should not eat any roasted food while she is trying to apply the qualities of her charm. She must also take the charm and rub it all over her body when she has recently given birth to a child or during her menstrual period. It is then that she should deny herself all [262] roasted food (meat, roasted corn, etc.) on which there has been direct action from fire. She should also abstain from all [95] kinds of milk, should not go out in the sun, and should not let her face be seen by another woman. This last point is very important as if this should happen the effects she seeks will be obtained not by the person following the indicated regimen but will [834] automatically be transferred to the woman who has seen her face. The woman who is owner of the charm must also abstain from cohabiting with her husband. When she bathes, she must do so not in the brook but inside her own home. The bathing must be done by another woman, starting at the crown of her head, then her shoulders, then her breast, and thus on to the whole body.

[95 cont.]

832 Once she has finished her bath, she must hang up her dress over her hammock to dry, also inside the house. It is also necessary for her to apply achiote powder to certain parts of her body, such as under her arms, on her breasts, on her genital organs, etc., with the object of aiding the magic action of the charm on those parts, and avoiding the loss or lessening of the magic power. This special regimen must be carried through for four consecutive days, at the end of which the effect has already been obtained — or at least there is no longer the fear that it may pass to some other person.

In general, every man or woman who possesses a charm keeps his body (armpits, breasts, genital organs, etc.) permanently dusted with achiote powder.

The men also make use of the same charms as the women. The magic power of these charms enables them to obtain the wholehearted love of women without their own affections becoming involved.

881 832 When a young woman reaches the age of puberty, and her first menstrual period arrives, a love charm is hung about her neck during all the time that she is kept indoors and hanging up in her hammock (ritual of initiation of young girls). This charm will give her the quality of being admired and loved by men. The plan in wearing this token is that when she leaves her seclusion she will find the man who will buy her for a wife at a good price. The charm is hung about the adolescent girl's neck by her mother or by a maternal aunt.

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832 When a girl's mother or aunt finds out that she has not been happy in her love life, they obtain charms which will make her more lovable and desirable.

[826] 832 673 Women should be very careful of their hair when it has been cut after the appearance of their first menstruation because if a man gets hold of it he practically becomes the owner of the woman, for by mixing it with hummingbird blood, dog's tail, and achiote he can make a charm which will act directly against the owner of the hair. The man, with the firm intention of causing her harm, may show her the charm or better still may produce it when she has her back to him. [96] The woman because of this simple charm becomes madly enamored with the man

[96 cont.]
832 673 and is made foolish and boastful of the difficult position she is placed in.

This charm, capable of such mischief according to the belief of the natives, is used especially when a man wishes to cause some woman harm or to mock either her or her relatives.

754 832 578 Fortunately for women in general they have a way to scoff at, or revenge themselves on, the men who have been false and whose love they no longer want – only revenge. For such cases they buy a charm from the old Indian women who know of these things, a charm which they place among the clothing of the man on whom they wish to effect a malevolent action. Then they obtain an old sandal belonging to their victim and burn it. It is most important that the sandal should be old so that the sweat of the man in question, as part of his personality, should have soaked into it. [826 828]

With these two simple things, the Indian women affirm, the man loses his senses, he goes about as if stupefied, neglects his person, is a failure and a brutish person thereafter. So sure are they of this that they say that a mad Indian living in Nazaret is in that condition because of a charm like that we have just described after he had been one of the most elegant and well dressed of Indians.

832 Another love charm is used not to regain a man's love that has been lost but to retain affection that is desired; and as it is the woman's property – for evil against the man – this aims at making the man unable to take another woman. This charm, like others, is obtained from the old Indian women of the Sierra de Jarara, and it is made of carefully ground herbs to which they add achiote, an excellent substance for charms. The mixture is wrapped in a rag, or it is kept in a little wool bag.

The effect of love charms can be diverted to other purposes. For example, when a woman wants her husband to make her a special present she goes to her charm, picks it up, shakes it well, and looks firmly at it, at the same time asking for the desired object. The charm works, and the woman obtains what she wished for.

Necklaces of small perforated discs of coconut shell are transformed into love charms when the women experts in this

[96 cont.]

832 witchcraft have "whispered" over them, that is, when they repeat over them a series of magic incantations which have the object of giving them the power to make a man, or men, love the owner [97] as she may desire, and especially her husband when it is the case of a married woman.

We have seen in previous paragraphs how the hair of a pubescent girl serves as a base for men to make magic charms which can be used against the girl. But the hair of such girls in different circumstances serves to attract men in general and causes a woman to be looked on with such deference by a man that he buys her to take as a wife at a good price. For this 826 reason the young Guajiro woman, especially those of the Sierra 302 de Jarara, keep their hair when it is cut. At times to make the action more effective and to obtain better and quicker results, [237] they place it under a patch of cow dung. The association of their hair with cow dung is founded on a socio-economic phenomenon which we might briefly clarify.

556 We have seen repeatedly that wealth in La Guajira is 583 calculated by the number of heads of livestock that an individ- 832 ual owns; and it can be observed how a wife in their social organization is obtained by purchase. When the buyer is a rich man he pays in heads of cattle or horses; when poor, in goats and sheep. Hence it is clear every woman aspires to be paid for in cows and in a greater number than those paid for other women, as this establishes an advance in her social status. This is the reason why she buries her hair under cow dung and not that of any other animal. She has made a very primitive association but [237] one that speaks for itself. It would appear that the magic attraction is brought about by the dung, and the results desired are increased if this is from the cow, the animal of most value in La Guajira.

826 In any case, young women are most careful about leaving their cut hair about where it could be picked up by another person, and for this reason they guard it all their lives, giving it in this way a sacred quality. This characteristic which we have called sacred stems from the magic connection established by the primitive between a person and the different parts of his body, to

[97 cont.]
826 which we have referred on various occasions in this work.

Hunting charms. We could only acquire data about the
224 type of talismans connected with the hunting of deer and rabbits. The object of such a talisman is a double one; on one hand, it inculcates ability and quickness on the part of the hunter who possesses it; and on the other, it exercises a restraining action on the animal he wishes to kill, as [98] according to the native belief, it stops its flight and converts it into an easy prey for the hunter.

[824] The charm for facilitating the hunting of rabbits is made with bejuco leaves, a plant known in La Guajira by the name of átpana-pi (átpana = "rabbit"). The leaves of this plant, which are used for making the charm, are long and shaped like a cartridge, which gives them a great likeness to rabbit ears. Besides this, it serves as food for rabbits, which they like a great deal.

To make the charm, the hunter carefully collects the leaves, grinds them up, and with the resulting powder makes small pellets resembling rabbit excrement. One of these small balls is carefully tied with a thread and is placed in the middle of the tassel which adorns the hand guard they use when drawing the bow. The effect of the charm is directed against the rabbit, limiting its chance of flight and thus making it easier for the hunter to secure his prey.

The charm used in hunting deer is also made from a plant [824] well known to the hunters. This plant, in form like the bejuco, has wide leaves which shine like a mirror. It abounds in the [192] forest and requires no special cultivation. In La Guajira it is called supána-unú; (su = neuter; pana = "leaf," "liver"; unú = "tree," "pole"; wunú = "remedy"). It is prepared in a similar way to that for hunting the rabbit and, as in that case, it is carried on the person of the hunter in the shape of small pellets [192] which are tied to the hand guard of his bow. Once finished it takes the name of sipi-iráma, (iráma = "deer"), and its object is to make the hunting of the deer easier by attracting it toward the hunter, who thus cannot fail in his shot. It also prevents the animal's flight, thus making it, as in the case of the rabbit, an easy prey.

[119 cont.]

787 interpretations, will suffice to show that the life of these Indians is built around natural and supernatural phenomena impregnated with a magic factor, and that it is difficult to separate them.

789 826 Other magical acts. The belief exists among these natives that to eat another person's leavings of food implies the acquiring of his qualities. Thus, if one eats the leavings of someone having white hair, one's own hair will become white. Women are therefore very addicted to eating food left by white women when they visit them because they want to obtain a paler complexion. It is also quite common among the men to eat food left by those who are distinguished for their bravery because by this they may acquire some of their courage. This belief extends to everything that may have contact with the person's mouth or breath. Cigar and cigarette butts have this same virtue. They also believe that if an Indian smokes a cigarette butt that has been thrown away by a foreigner, he will acquire one of the qualities of that foreigner — his beard.

788 789 This gives us a clue to the existence of what some authors have called mana. It is nothing more than a memory which shows itself in the magic phenomena we have been describing. The idea is not clear but it may be presumed to have existed in former times. Mana is a force that transmits qualities; it is both energy and vitality, which in spite of being intangible impregnates everything it touches. It can be absorbed or acquired in different ways, and from this we derive the explanation which has been given for cannibalism in some primitive tribes. Its concomitant effect is that it has led the Guajiro to keep one of the aspects of this idea: that food, and in general all objects that have been in intimate contact with a person who has certain characteristics, superior in the eyes of the native since he wants them and would feel more complete with them, bring him that force, that singular essence, through magnetization — permit us the term for its graphicness — which it has acquired by touching the possessor of such qualities. [120]

The object, or the food, has robbed, so to speak, a little mana from the individual who was in intimate contact with it.

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881 584 invitation. Again cattle are butchered, and there is drinking and dancing and horse-racing. Numbers of men come to see if they would like to put themselves forward as suitors. The more eminent guests are received in the house itself, and the girl is now present. Her shorn hair has grown and been trimmed to a page-boy cut, and she wears her best clothes and new ornaments. She hides her hair clippings carefully in a bag, for she does not want to risk anyone getting hold of them and using them to acquire power over her by the arts of magic. Later, she will secretly bury them under a cow pat. That will help to increase her herds. The droppings of various animals play a great part in the magic of the Guajiro, and it would seem that there is negro influence here as well.

[754 826] [789 514]

881 The girl has now been born again—she is a new person, a woman. She knows all that an adult woman needs to know and can do everything that a wife and mother should be able to do. Pale and lovely, she steps out into life once more and inquisitive young men swarm round her. The rich give a big feast, the poor provide simpler fare, but it is always a great occasion.

[582] A Guajiro man will never marry a girl before she has undergone this period of confinement, which means that people seldom marry too early. It is said that in the old days rich old men with several wives sometimes bought little poor girls as concubines, believing that that would enhance their virility.

[595 831]

The girl's long segregation is intended to protect her from the supernatural dangers that are thought to threaten her, especially during this sensitive period of transition from childhood to womanhood. The girl can also be dangerous to others through being exposed to attack by spirits. It is only practical that during this period she should practise handicrafts.

252 [354] Going back to the house, we found the women at the fires, which there were protected by special small cactus screens. There was no need to have them under a roof at that time of the year, only to shelter them from the wind. The pots stood over the fire supported on three stones.